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## ***FEATURE ARTICLE***

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### **Cooperation, Success and Precision in Kosovo: Security Assistance Hits the Mark!**

**By**

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and  
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*“In February and March 1999, the Belgian Air Force made an emergency request to the U.S. Air Force to purchase Maverick missiles needed to support our participation in Kosovo air operations...I am writing this letter to thank your Air Force for the quick and positive response...Your rapid reaction reflects once more the close relationship which exists between our two air forces.”*

Letter of Appreciation from MGen Mardaga, Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans, Operations and Personnel, Belgian Air Force to SAF/IA

Kosovo, the very name evokes images of precision aircraft and weaponry—of carefully taking out a target while minimizing collateral damage, of an entire conflict fought with zero Allied combat losses, of combat missions flown with either American aircraft or munitions—it all adds up to an amazing bulls-eye for NATO and America. But, how did we get to the point where Air Forces of many different countries were able and willing to operate in a combined arms setting? Not easily. The victory in Operation Allied Force was fifty years in the making. Its origins can be traced to NATO’s founding and the determination of the transatlantic allies to work together for peace. The victory in Kosovo was in many ways a victory for engagement and a validation of the efforts of those who make security assistance work.

Making security assistance work is what we do in SAF/IA, a unit of 200 people reporting Willard H. Mitchell, the Deputy Undersecretary of the Air Force for International Affairs. Prior to assuming his current position, Mr. Mitchell served as the deputy assistant secretary of the Air Force for program and budget, the Air force’s principal deputy assistant secretary for financial management, and, in senior executive positions where he was responsible for international business development for Lockheed Aeronautics Systems and Teledyne Industries International.

We promote successful engagement by focusing on our principal National Military Strategy goals: shaping the international environment, responding to the full spectrum of crises, and preparing now for an uncertain future. SAF/IA’s mission remains constant yet evolving: to create, advocate and facilitate USAF policies and programs that support U.S. national security objectives through international politico-military affairs, the \$108 billion foreign military sales program, education and training, cooperative research and development, and related endeavors, in concert with U.S. government, foreign and industry partners. These efforts, that paid such huge dividends

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in Kosovo, will only become more important as the USAF implements the new Expeditionary Aerospace Force (EAF) concept.



## Shaping the Environment

**Engagement.** Security assistance represents a powerful tool for shaping the international environment through various forms of engagement activity, including International Military Education and Training, shared military research and development, and foreign military sales (FMS). Additionally, we help to shape the international environment by building people to people relationships. Our attachés, foreign area, exchange and security assistance officers build relationships with their counterparts and other internationals. Relationships lead to access and influence. Some of our attachés are on a first name basis with the ruler of a country!

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**Interoperability and coalition building.** It was no surprise that in Kosovo, and to a similar but less exclusive extent in the Gulf War, American aircraft and munitions played a dominant role. Efforts to achieve interoperability in order to fight effectively in a coalition are not new. The need was recognized at least as early as WWII. However, the events of this decade have taught us that effective coalition warfare is not a luxury, but a necessity, as our National Security Strategy now indicates. By laying the foundation that allows allies to operate effectively together, security assistance serves as an indispensable U.S. military force multiplier!

## Responding to Crises

Kosovo only confirmed the startling revelations of the Gulf War as seen through footage of munitions heading through a door or down an airshaft. Precision guided munitions (PGMs) are not only effective but are becoming a virtual political as well as military necessity. The need to preserve the sometimes fragile Allied consensus for action in Kosovo demanded that NATO member nations share the military burden and that they do so with means suitable to the political realities. The need to limit collateral damage as an overriding political requirement put a premium on precision engagement capability. As our NATO allies used up their limited supply of PGMs, they had to find a source of replenishment or risk becoming spectators, an eventuality that could have undermined the sense of shared responsibility—and the political will—necessary to sustain the Alliance effort.

In order to meet this urgent need, SAF/IA led a senior level working group that included AF/XO, DSCA and others with the goal of expediting Allied requests for PGMs and other equipment in support of air operations over Kosovo. Over 4,800 munitions were delivered as well as other equipment (including LANTIRN pods and training) in a process accelerated from a normal one to two year lead time to a matter of weeks or days. Where able, production lines were accelerated or munitions issued from U.S. stocks. Payment/delivery options issues were resolved and the goods were delivered as soon as possible.

## Prepare Now

**EAF.** As Kosovo demonstrated, coalitions, alliances, and PGMs are clearly in our future. But, how do these trends play into the USAF reorganization around the Expeditionary Aerospace Force concept? First, a word or two about what the EAF is and why it came about. The EAF is

**“The European Participating Air Forces specifically the Royal Netherlands Air Force was in the first wave of airstrikes over Kosovo scoring one MiG kill. this was the first operational launch of an AMRAAM missile fired by one of our NATO Allies.”**  
***Netherlands Significant Activities Report,***  
**ODC The Hague.**

a 21st century USAF organized, trained and equipped to deploy and sustain itself in the global security environment. In essence, ten Aerospace Expeditionary Forces (AEFs) will be put together from various units in the USAF representing different air power missions. Two of these AEFs will be “on call” at any given time for immediate deployment. Theater or warfighting CINCs use capabilities of AEFs to tailor

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their responses. Under joint operations, the aerospace arm of the CINCs joint task force would be comprised of the Aerospace Expeditionary Task Force. This task force, made up of aerospace expeditionary wings, groups or squadrons, would meet the daily operational requirements of the CINC. How is this different from the past? Well, formerly units were tasked as needed on an ad hoc basis in a more reactive mode and pieced

together as a fighting unit after arrival in theater. Now, these units will have a set schedule, will train together and fight together. Why did this come about? During the cold war we had far more aircraft and personnel forward based in Europe, Asia and other locations. These “tip of the spear” personnel were ready for any conflict and formed the basis for an expeditionary force. Today, with two-thirds fewer overseas bases, with an average of 14,000 personnel and 220 aircraft deployed at any given time a change was necessary.

#### **EAF: Why?**

- **USAF average 14,000 people, 220 Aircraft deployed at any given time**
- **Two thirds less overseas basing**
- **One third less people**
- **Four times more deployments than cold war**
- **Engagement vs containment strategy**

Not only will CONUS-based AEFs deploy to fight the next conflict, they continue to deploy in “peacetime” areas of operational need such as in Kosovo and Operations Northern/Southern watch. Should an AEF be needed in time of conflict or in a peacekeeping operation, will they have the access to overseas operating locations they will need? Will they be able to integrate and operate with the other forces participating in the coalition? Drawing perhaps the most important lesson of all from the Allied victory in Kosovo, it is our solemn duty to ensure that by preparing now for an uncertain future, the answer to those questions will be yes!

**Future.** Since 1995, SAF/IA has been “reinventing” USAF security assistance procedures both internally and in concert with other U.S. government agencies and industry/foreign customers tremendous progress has been made. Our Reinvention Laboratory (RLAB) has worked to streamline FMS processes by eliminating duplication, reducing costs, and enhancing responsiveness to our customers. Chaired by BGen Jeffrey Kohler, Assistant Deputy, Under Secretary of the Air Force, International Affairs, RLAB efforts are directed by a senior USAF FMS manager steering committee coordinating four process action teams: case execution, disclosure, financial management, and training. Deputy Secretary of Defense Hamre’s call in the spring of 1998 to reengineer and improve the FMS system increased the momentum and appetite for improvement and has accelerated our determination further. We have combined our efforts with those of our sister services and have begun improvement efforts in related areas.

**Export Licensing.** Through the DoD-chartered Export Control Rapid Improvement Team we have begun to see improvements in interagency coordination. Two of our proposals, a license application guideline template for U.S. defense industry and refining guidance on what license cases need to be referred to the Air Force (and other services), were adopted already. These and other internal improvements have reduced our average license review time from 40 to 7 days and have reduced our average outstanding case load from 700 to approximately 150 cases! Improving our license review and service to customers and industry continues to be a high priority for us.

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**Teaming with Industry.** Our efforts to include industry in our RLAB and export license improvement efforts echoes the call by the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology to form a united U.S. front in international competitions. During the past year continuous give and take with our industry partners and HJFord (charged to lead the overall DoD and DSCA's FMS reform process) facilitated teaming measures. These partnerships have not only intensified our endeavor but also enhanced our responsiveness to our international partners.

**Training.** We have aggressively pursued a new enhanced training initiative designed both to better prepare USAF security assistance personnel and to increase foreign visibility into the FMS processes. Our new formal financial training curriculum begins in early spring and is the result of inter and multi-service collaboration. Teaming with the Air Force Financial Management Directorate, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, and the other services, we have collaborated closely with DISAM to develop the first FMS case closure/reconciliation instructional program. This collaboration has already improved our FMS practices and given our international partners much of the transparency they have sought.

**Cooperation.** One final note on the future. We are always looking for ways to cooperate with our friends and allies. We save money this way, but more importantly we gain the trust, confidence and a close working relationship with our friends. Take, for example, the joint Japan-U.S. Aces II ejection seat program. Japan and the U.S. have a need for an ejection seat that will accommodate smaller pilots. Instead of a wholly financed, developed and produced U.S. solution (costly) that we would sell to the Japanese (politically unpopular) a joint Japan-U.S. program is a win-win solution.

## Shooting Ahead

As we enter the 21st century, the United States faces an uncertain and rapidly changing global environment, replete with both opportunities and challenges. Where we have vital interests, the U.S. military strives to strengthen core alliances and allies to prepare for these changes. Our defense efforts not only help to promote regional stability, but allow us to shape the international environment to meet the objectives of U.S. National Security Strategy. As Operation Allied Force proved, by leading and assisting our international partners, we can adapt successfully to today's new challenges and enhance U.S. security at home and abroad.

Though predominantly an aerospace effort, the Kosovo experience contains lessons for the entire U.S. security assistance community. A successful coalition operation cannot be cobbled together overnight. We pave the way to success in future conflicts now. We, SAF/IA, commit ourselves to the continuous improvement of security assistance processes and look forward to future U.S. international engagement efforts.

## About the Authors

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